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SUBJECT: TERMS OF REFERENCE: SNIE 30-57: MAJOR FACTORS AFFECTING
US INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

THE PROBLEM

To identify the principal conditions and trends affecting US interests in the Middle East* and the specific problems and opportunities they pose for the US.

SCOPE

This estimate is designed to support an early NSC review of the US policy paper on the Near East (NSC 5428). Inasmuch as most aspects of the evolving Middle East situation are already the subject of extensive coverage in NIE's and other intelligence media, we envisage a relatively short paper whose essential purpose would be to pull together the various strands of the Middle East situation as it affects the US, thereby providing a coherent basis for policy formulation. Such an estimate would be designed as the basis for "General Considerations" section of a new regional policy paper. In any event, it would provide a coordinated intelligence judgment regarding the factors to be taken into account in any spelling out of specific US policies for the Middle East and regarding the nature and implications of the alternatives likely to be open to the US.

* NSC 5428 is primarily concerned with the Arab states and Israel but also treats of Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan insofar as they affect the more narrowly defined area. Presumably, the new policy paper will do the same.

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AGENDA FOR ORAL CONTRIBUTIONS MEETING

The problem before us is: (a) first to identify the major persistent trends in the area likely to affect US interests and policy over the next few years; and (b) secondly to exchange views regarding these trends. Listed below are suggested items for discussion.

A. Communist Capabilities and Intentions: What circumstances are most likely to favor an increase in Communist influence? How valid is the "vacuum theory," i.e., that competition between the US and the USSR for influence is a central factor affecting Middle East developments? Can we identify more precisely just what such an increase in Communist influence would mean to US interests--particularly in military and economic terms? Can we identify forces at work in the area which can be exploited to counter an increase in Communist influence? What are the prospects for some form of accommodation between the US and the USSR in the Middle East?

B. The UN: What are the capabilities of the UN for influencing developments in the Middle East in a manner favorable to the US? Can the UN cope with the basic causes of instability, ferment and controversy in the area?

C. Arab Nationalism: How strong are the forces supporting such regimes as that of Nasr? What factors affect US ability to influence such forces without becoming embroiled in inter-Arab disputes? What are the consequences of the US becoming identified with one or another of opposing Arab factors? How strong are the forces working for and against Arab unity?

-2-

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D. Arab-Israeli Dispute: Have prospects for major hostilities been lessened by recent events? Concurrently, have prospects for settlement improved or worsened? What new factors affect US ability to work toward a settlement of the issue?

E. Military vs. Economic: What are prevailing attitudes of the Arab states toward what could be described as "military" vs. "economic" approaches by the Big Powers to the problems of the area? What kinds, if any, of foreign military and economic aid are the states of the area likely to seek?

F. Oil: What are the main factors, including the above which are likely to affect the continued availability to the West of Middle East oil? As matters now stand, what is the outlook with respect to the Suez situation and the IPC pipelines? Are economic pressures likely to significantly effect Egyptian and Syrian policies?

G. The UK and France: What are likely to be the principal problems for the US posed by British and French actions in the area?

-3-

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